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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 002055

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SUBJECT: READ OUT FROM JUNE 17 MCNS

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C/REL MNF-I) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Maliki presided over the June 17 meeting of the Ministerial Committee for National Security, during which:

--Maliki conveyed his outrage over a public conference held by the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MeK) earlier in the week and stressed that the GOI should take the lead in securing the MeK camp in Ashraf while the government works with the U.S. Embassy to dissolve the camp immediately.

--Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh congratulated Maliki on his timely response to the Samara bombing but emphasized the government must do more to secure Iraq's sacred sites. National Security Advisor Rubaie, among others, lamented the failure of the Iraqi security forces to act on the intelligence provided two weeks prior to the attack that predicted the mortaring of the two minarets. Maliki asked all present to refrain from public statements of blame until the on-ground investigation was completed.

--Maliki led the discussion on the plan to secure Basrah which includes: replacement of the governor, provincial police chief and the emergency security committee; reconfiguration of the Tenth Division; and the appointment of an overall Basrah Operations Commander direct the army and the police. Maliki directed all Ministers to support the plan noting force alone would not solve the complex political problems of Basra.

--National Security Advisor Rubaie outlined his proposal to establish an Iraqi-managed and resourced national reconciliation committee to work with the Coalition on a tribal and armed group engagement program.

--National Security Advisor Rubaie asked if the ministers had any comments on the draft National Security Strategy for Iraq. None appeared to have read the document and Rubaie said that he would redistribute the NSS and requested ministerial comments before it was submitted to a future MCNS for approval.

--General Petraeus discussed the surge operations and asked for all ministers to use their Sadrists contacts to tell JAM to stand down while the Coalition and Iraq security forces take on Al Qaeda.

--Maliki told General Petraeus that he had warned Sadrists not to march to Samara on July 6 as it was dangerous and would disrupt ongoing security operations against the enemy.

END SUMMARY.

Maliki's Way Forward on MeK

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¶2. (C/REL MNF-I) Maliki expressed continued frustration with the MeK Camp and his outrage over the recent conference they held, despite GOI opposition. The conference, he noted, brought hundreds of Iraqis together, including Salah Mutlak, to discuss the state of Iraq. He fumed that the MeK is a terrorist group, working against his government and his people and they have no legal right to remain in Iraq. They all must go either to Iran or a third country that will accept them. He added only those with Iraqi judicial arrest warrants against them may remain in Iraq.

¶3. (C/REL MNF-I) After his tirade which was supported by other ministers including Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh, Minister of Defense Abdul Qader, and Interior Minister Jawad Bulani, Maliki requested that MNF-I turn protection responsibilities of the MeK over to the Iraqi security forces so they can ensure that no one leaves the camp and that outside visitors do not get in. Maliki said this force would be provided while the Iraqi government works with the U.S. Embassy to dissolve the camp.

¶4. (C/REL MNF-I) The Ambassador assured Maliki that he was consulting with Washington on a way forward with the MeK and General Petraeus committed to reviewing the legality of having ISF assist with protecting the camp. The Ambassador also recommended GOI and USG host a conference with countries that might be willing to take some of the MeK members who currently hold UNHCR refugee status. Both the Ambassador and General Petraeus stressed that while the USG would like to resolve the MeK issue quickly, it would take time due to international laws and policies that the USG is obligated to uphold with regard to the MeK. Maliki retorted that the USG and the international community must also recognize and

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respect the international laws regarding a nation's sovereignty and anti-terrorism.

Samara Mosque Attack

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¶5. (C/REL MNF-I) Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salah thanked Maliki for his handling of the Samara mosque bombing but stressed that the government must do a better job of protecting Iraq's holy sites. Maliki agreed, saying that in the days leading up to the bombing, the Facilities Protection Service and police responsible for the protection of Samara mosque had assured him and others that all was secure. Bulani interjected that National Police commander Adnan Thabit was responsible for Samara security and had informed Iraqi officials that all was fine prior to the attack. Rubaie asserted that the blame lay with the ISF commanders who did not act on intelligence reports that projected the minarets would be mortared in the coming days. Maliki said that whoever is responsible would be identified and held accountable but asked all to refrain from assigning blame until the investigation was completed and its findings were reported to him.

Maliki's Security Plan for Basrah

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¶6. (C/REL MNF-I) Maliki said securing Basrah remained a priority and that he expected all ministers to support the implementation of his new security plan. Maliki said his proposal calls for immediate replacement of the governor of provincial police chief and the disbanding of the current emergency council. He noted a new emergency committee would be formed by Acting Justice Minister, Dr. Safaa al-Safi. (NOTE: Safi seemed caught off guard by this order.) Bulani said that to support the plan, his staff was vetting all current Basrah police and would fire all those determined corrupt or complicit in militia activities. Minister of Defense Abdul Qader explained that he was in the midst of replacing the ineffective First Brigade of the Tenth Division

with the better qualified Third Brigade of the same division and said that he was also working with MNSTC-I to create a new brigade for deployment to Basrah. Abdul Qader also noted that Major General Mohan would become the overall security commander of Basra with the 10 Division's commander and the police chief reporting to him. Maliki questioned Mohan's appointment, saying he thought Mohan was recently deployed to Karbala to be overall commander of that province. UK Ambassador Asquith suggested that Maliki provide a written directive laying out the elements of the plan in order to clarify the confusing situation.

Rubaie's National Reconciliation Committee

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¶7. (C/REL MNF-I) Rubaie briefed his proposal to establish a national reconciliation committee to review groups and individuals who claim they want to "lay down their arms" and join the political process. He said the window of opportunity was now given the recent uprising against Al Qaeda and the Al Anbar tribal "awakening." He stressed the committee would be a Government of Iraq-owned and resourced committee that would work closely with the Coalition. He also emphasized the committee should be small and have the authority to determine the eligibility of candidates for reconciliation. He also explained that this committee would also work elements of disarmament, reintegration into the armed force and civilian programs, as well as amnesty. Maliki agreed with the concept but warned Rubaie that he wanted just one, small committee not an organization with several sub-groups and complex command structure. Maliki said that he desires a simple process for engagement but also one that ensures the loyalty of those entering the process. Maliki also warned this group must be able to identify con-artists and ensure against the reconstitution of the Ba'ath party. Deputy Prime Minister Salaam Zubaie cautioned against being to strict against Ba'athists as there were thousands of them that would want to reconcile and had no interest in the Ba'athist ideology.

Surging Against Al Qaeda

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¶8. (C/REL MNF-I) General Petraeus told the meeting participants that all US surge combat forces were now in place and that these forces were starting multiple offensive operations against Al Qaeda in Baghdad, around the Baghdad belts, Anbar, Diyala, and wherever else Al Qaeda may seek to open battle fronts. He asked all of the ministers to use all

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of their contacts to get JAM "off our backs" while we go after Al Qaeda, stressing "We will never have an opportunity like this to go after Al Qaeda" and we cannot afford to divert troops from fighting Al Qaeda toward taking on JAM and extremist Shia militias.

¶9. (C/REL MNF-I) Maliki responded that Iraqi security forces must work in coordination with the Coalition, but that all forces must retain the independence and capability to rapidly react to enemy movements. Maliki agreed to Bulani's recommendation that the Government of Iraq put out a public statement telling all Iraqis that the fight is concentrated on everyone's enemy in Iraq, Al Qaeda and that being the case we need all Iraqis to respect the law. Failure to do so will result in action against them.

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